



KAPTAN JUNE – Joan Christine HAIMOFF , 1922-2022.

Kaptan June first came to Dalyan in the early/mid 1980's when she used to sail her boat along the coast. She loved Dalyan, and vowed to return one day.

June did indeed return to Dalyan and settled in the village and in April 1984, after a winter in Switzerland she had built her own beach hut, which she occupied each summer until 1986. She was part of a small settlement of similar huts that were at the end of the beach and was the only non-Turkish person who lived there.

Sitting quietly on the beach one evening she saw a turtle come up out of the sea, make its way across the beach and then proceed to lay eggs in the sand. June had been told about the turtles that visited Iztuzu Beach but this was the first time she had actually seen one. She was immediately fascinated. Over the next few years she researched their lifestyle and watched for them on the beach.

In the winter of 1986 the local Council decided that for health reasons the huts must be demolished. This was a ruse and in April 1987 there was a stone laying ceremony to mark the building of a new hotel.

June discovered that plans were being put in place to build a hotel and marina on Iztuzu Beach. She instantly realised that, should this development go ahead, it would have a disastrous effect on the turtles that visited the beach.

Kaptan June made up her mind that she had to do something about it.

In April 1987 building started on an 1800-bed hotel complex by the name of *Kaunos Beach Hotel*. This caused a storm of protests world-wide. There were protests from the [IUCN](#)- The International Union for Conservation of Nature , [Greenpeace](#), the [World Wildlife Fund](#) – WWF and the *Zoologische Gesellschaft Frankfurt*. Particularly in the former Federal Republic of Germany the building caused a major uproar, because the German DEG (Deutsche Finanzierungsgesellschaft für Beteiligungen in Entwicklungsländern) wanted to use an amount equivalent to 5 million euros from public means under the pretense of [development aid](#).

June Haimoff approached the WWF and consequently [Prince Philip](#)—then President—asked the Turkish Prime Minister [Turgut Özal](#) for a moratorium, while awaiting the outcome of an [Environmental Impact Assessment](#). In the meantime the German Federal Government had forbidden DEG to invest development aid money for the building of the Kaunos Beach Hotel.¹²

This led to a collaboration of NGO's, Government Ministries and other environmentalists including David Bellamy in England, Lily Venezelos - Medasset in Greece, Günther Peter – Germany, Nergis Yazgan – WWF in Turkey and geologist Keith Corbett and Abidin Kurt from Dalyan.

Eventually, because of the publicity that she spearheaded the development was stopped in September 1987 and Iztuzu Beach was granted Protection Status by the Turkish Government in 1988. The Köyceğiz-Dalyan region obtained the status of **Special Environmental Protection Area** (SEPA). At the time, it was one of the very first such Protection Orders issued by the Turkish Government.

June's hut was removed from the beach in March 1987 and installed in the garden at her new home, an old Turkish house that took 15 months to renovate. She calls it "The Peaceable Kingdom". She lived a very active life in the same house, supported by many friends and surrounded by her many dogs and cats till 2022.

June's dream was to have an enduring legacy for the loggerhead turtles of Iztuzu Beach after winning the campaign to save the beach back in 1986.

In April 2009 June became a Turkish citizen, which enables her to legally fulfil a long held ambition to create a 'Foundation' in her name to support the ongoing work of conservation in Dalyan. With friends she set about raising the funds to bond the foundation and after 3 years of fund raising succeeded.

The Foundation was inaugurated in 2011 and Kaptan June's beach hut, after languishing in her Dalyan garden for many years, has been renovated and returned to the beach and it was the mainstay of her campaign to continue the environmental work for the turtles and the environment in general on the now famous, award winning, natural Iztuzu Beach.

Education brochures, children's packs, signage helped to spread the work of the Foundation. 'Friends of the Foundation' was also set up as a way of extending the education programmes. Breakfast's at the beach hut were a common happening and the generosity of the public and of course of buying one of June's books, signed by her with maybe a photo on the verandah of the beach hut was highly sort after. June was in her element, she loved people and the opportunity to share her passion.

A campaign to have all the boats of Dalyan supplied and fitted with FREE OF CHARGE propeller guards commenced to save the carapace of the turtles from damage from propellers, stopping the feeding of the turtles under the Bern convention, the Foundation had representation to Ankara and to the British Consulate to gain their support.

Days were filled with reaching out to local government authorities for support and June was very highly thought of, receiving many local awards and featuring in newspapers both in Turkiye and in the UK.

She was awarded an MBE for conservation of the turtles in Turkiye, a first time for a British person to receive this award when living in a foreign country. She was on a roll and made the

most of the publicity to push harder for more environmental controls locally.

Awareness of her 'Beach Hut' grew and she enjoyed visiting the beach hut nearly every day up until her later years and of course the dreaded covid bringing everything to a close.

June's passing on the 23rd April 2022 was a very sad occasion for Dalyan and it's people. Her inspiration to set up this Foundation and work with other NGO's has made Dalyan a place of natural interest and is currently under review to be listed under the UNESCO emblem.

It is a privilege to have known this eclectic and energetic lady. Dalyan is the poorer for her passing.

A team of local Turkish people are working to keep this Foundation going as June wanted an enduring legacy for the future of Iztuzu Beach and Dalyan environs.

<https://dalyanturtles.com/>

Much of this history is documented in more detail in June's autobiographic books;

- 'Kaptan June and the Dalyan Turtles' 1997 and 2006, Published by Inkilap
- 'Kaptan June ve Kaplumbağalar' Turkish language edition 2001 and 2012, Published by Remzi
- '**Breakfast With Kaptan June**', 2005, Published by Inkilap.
- '**Kaptan June Makes Waves**', 2014, Published by Inkilap.
- '**The Adventures of LOLA – The Cat That Can**, 2014, Published by Inkilap.
- '**The Adventures of LOLA – The Cat That Can** – Lola's second adventure, 2014, Published by Inkilap.
- **Evi ve Kahvaltı Çetesi**, 2013, Turkish, English and German editions, Published by the Foundation.

Besides her books, following is also an attempt to understand her life;

- She recorded a CD in 2001 to financially support her turtle campaign; tracks include 'Merhaba', 'Iztuzu Blues' and 'Star of Dalyan'.
- Kaptan June , DVD, Medien Produktion – is a documentary by Barbara Trottnow in 2013 in memory of June's 90th birthday. It is available at www.bt-medienproduktion.de.
- 100 milyon year journey, Life of caretta caretta sea turtle, IZ TV, 2013.
- Female turtles take around 20-25 years to reach maturity, and then mate only every other year.
- A female turtle will lay around 100 eggs at a time – if all of them hatch and make it successfully to the sea it's estimated that around only 5 will grow to full maturity. Additionally, it's not known how many of that 100 that hatch are male and how many are female.
- A female turtle has to return to the beach where she was hatched in order to mate – if she cannot do that then she will simply cease mating.
- Turtles are very shy creatures and are very easily disturbed by noise, lights, movement in the water, etc.